

"Alias Jimmy Valentine"



Novelized by
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From the Great
Play
by **PAUL ARMSTRONG**

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VALENTINE, WARDEN HANDLER AND ROSE LANE.

SYNOPSIS.

Warden Handler of Sing Sing prison and Detective George Doyle endeavor to prevail on Bill Avery, a released prisoner, to search out information against a former "pal," a young convict known as Jimmy Valentine. Avery refuses, and Doyle and Handler threaten to attack him. Valentine had a trick of opening safes solely for the sake of them.

EVERYBODY, LAURENCE, governor says, his beautiful niece, Rose Lane, and two women workers in a rescue mission visit the prison.

Warden Handler hears Rose Lane tell how she was rescued from a thief on a train, and he is amazed at a coincidence. Convict Jimmy Valentine, No. 1289, is brought into the warden's office to open a safe as an object lesson to the visitors, and Rose recognizes him as the man who saved her from the thief.

CONTINUED FROM LAST TUESDAY

He well knew what to do should complications ensue. There were dark cells in Sing Sing for convicts the warden could decide to be unruly. These were damp, dark cells below the level of the rushing river, relics of years when the state had little money and little thought for those held to have broken its laws. There were cells with "straitjackets," where a man could be trussed up with straps fixed to the walls, like a scuttling pig in a market window, only his toes touching the floor. Anyway No. 1289 was already discredited.

"Got Valentine?" he gruffly said to Smith. "Well, governor," he continued in a more amiable tone, "I'll give you and the ladies a romantic type. He's not a poet, but he is doing ten years here for opening a bank safe without tools or the combination, simply by sense of touch. There is some poetry in that."

"Impossible!" commented Fay. "Well, the bank safe was opened and the money stolen, and his pal peached."

The door at the right of the office leading in from the corridors of cells opened. In came Smith, followed by a young man whose convict's garb could not overshadow the intelligence that showed in his ashen face. Clearly the prison air was working its baneful penalty on him with more success than usual in the case of men who entered the institution in good health. Vaguely conscious that there were visitors present, No. 1289 stood before the warden with his eyes directed toward the floor. His shoulders were square, he was of good height, with a figure which yet bore indications that he had been athletic in his free days. When he had entered the room the lieutenant governor had noticed that the convict walked with a free, manly stride, having no semblance to the shuffling prison slouch of his fellow inmates.

"Permit me," Handler addressed his visitors, with an elaborate gesture,

"to present 'Mr. Jimmy Valentine.' He's put more time kicks on the retired list than my three men in the whole place, and when it comes to the fancy 'getaway' only a cross-eyed copper can keep tabs on him."

The warden's picturesque introduction was lost on Rose Lane. She caught a glimpse of the face of the man in felon's stripes. She leaned to one side to make certain. Yes; now she could not possibly be mistaken. She extended her hand spasmodically and clutched the lieutenant governor's arm.

"Uncle, uncle," she said chokingly, "it is he!"

"What's the matter, child?" was Fay's anxious response.

"That is the man who saved me!" the excited young girl gasped. "That is the man who threw the burglar through the express train window!"

The warden's shifting eye caught the agitated movement of Rose Lane as Jimmy Valentine was brought in, and he quickly resolved on a course of procedure that would place the young prisoner in as bad a light as possible. As for the lieutenant governor, he was almost as astonished as Rose at the unexpected denouement, and he quietly insisted that she say nothing more about the subject and calm herself. So far as outward manifestations were concerned, the girl followed this advice fairly well, but her heart pounded uncontrolledly, her pulse throbbled correspondingly, and a wave of deepest pity surged over her as she realized the horrible lot to which had been condemned the hero of the one great adventure of her life, the gallant Prince Charming of the only real romance in which she had ever played a part.

The lieutenant governor addressed the prisoner:

"How do you do, sir?"

Valentine swung around and faced the speaker. He realized that he could no longer conceal his features from the spectator. He pressed his hands nervously together and looked his questioner squarely in the eyes.

"How do you do, sir?" he said in a low voice.

Handler was watching the exchange of greetings with keen interest.

"Met before, governor, have you?" he asked ingenuously.

"No," responded Fay. "But I'm glad to see you have some types here different than 'Dick the Rat' and—"

"Yes," broke in the warden. "Here, Jimmy, there's something gone wrong with the office safe. Open it for me, will you?"

Fay fastened a penetrating gaze on Valentine.

The prisoner turned his face away and toward the warden.

"I'll do so very gladly if I can. What is the combination?"

"Combination!" exploded the warden, staring at the prisoner.

Valentine was as cool and as insistent as though he were an employer talking with one of his clerks.

"Yes, the combination. How can you expect me to open the safe without it? Why, Mr. Warden, you must be joking with me."

AVERTS AWFUL TRAGEDY.

Timely advice given Mrs. C. W. W. Loughby of Marengo, Wis., (R. No. 1) prevented a dreadful tragedy and saved two lives. Doctors had said her frightful cough was a "consumption" cough and could do little to help her. After many remedies failed, her aunt urged her to take Dr. King's New Discovery. I have been using it for some time," she wrote "and the awful cough has almost gone. It also saved my little boy when taken with a severe bronchial trouble. This matchless medicine has no equal for throat and lung troubles. Price 50 cents and \$1.00. Trial bottle free Guaranteed by Penny's Drug store.

Rose Lane smiled complacently into the lieutenant governor's face.

Handler's face became red—a deep red that threatened any moment to merge into a rich grape purple hue.

"You go at that safe and open it just like you need the coin!" he shouted.

Valentine made a deprecatory gesture.

"You flatter me," he answered, and he smiled a most aggravating smile that caused the now thoroughly aroused prison master to pound his desk and hoarsely cry:

"Flattery be damned! You do as I say or I'll give you the—"

Handler caught himself just in time. He suddenly remembered that the lieutenant governor was present. "Say, Valentine," he substituted for his intended threat of the straitjacket, "you're fourflushing because there's a gallery present, eh?"

No. 1289 turned and surveyed the visitors present. His gaze passed from the lieutenant governor to the two members of the Gate of Hope society. Then in the background, half crouched into one of the uncomfortable wooden chairs that adorned the warden's office, he saw a girlish figure. He leaned forward involuntarily, for he saw a face and a pair of large brown eyes fixed steadfastly upon him. He recognized the girl as the one he had saved from the remorseless clutches of Billy Cotton—Cotton, whom he had thrown to his death through the window of a transcontinental liner. But only for a moment did Jimmy Valentine falter. With masterful control he wheeled to face the warden. "You are wrong again," he said evenly to Handler. "You know I am not what you would have these people think I am."

Now the grape purple began to show in the warden's face. The thick veins in his neck began to thicken still more and to crowd his low collar for space.

"You better do as I ask, Valentine," he warned.

"I know that every one here knows that, but—"

"You're doing too far opening a bank safe and you can't open an old safe like mine?" The warden was sneering.

"I never opened that bank safe. You know that."

"You're going to pose, eh? Well, listen, you go and 'top that gopher' or I'll give you solitary for a month." Handler was now at his worst. A month of "solitary." A month, thirty days, thirty nights, alone, save for the rats and the river tides that seeped between the stones!

"It is an impossibility for any one to open a safe without the combination. I regret I cannot do as you ask."

Handler forgot the presence of the lieutenant governor and of the ladies.

"Get out of here, you!"

Mrs. Webster stepped forward protestingly.

Fay determined to take a hand.

"You're losing your temper, warden," he began when he saw the prisoner step to the door through which he had come. "Just a moment," Fay said commandingly to the convict. "I forgot your name."

The prisoner halted. He saw that the speaker had come across to the



MRS. WEBSTER STEPPED FORWARD PROTESTINGLY.

middle of the office. "My name is Valentine, sir," he responded.

"With your permission, warden, I will speak further with this young man," Fay directed at Handler.

"Aw, he's making a grand stand play because there is some one here," and you—"

Handler was apologetic.

"I've only—"

"If you please, I should like to talk to Valentine," spoke Fay coldly.

"All right, go ahead. He's waiting to talk."

"Valentine," said the lieutenant governor, "can you not as a favor to us, a lot of skeptics, open the prison safe?"

The prisoner came toward the officer of the state.

"If the warden will favor me with the combination I will try."

Handler broke in. "You fourflushing—"

"And without it?" continued Fay.

"I could no more do it than you sir."

"Were you not convicted for doing just what we ask?"

"Yes, sir, on the evidence of a dyin' crook and—"

"That'll do, Valentine," interjected the warden.

"One moment, Mr. Handler," said Fay, raising his hand. "You were about to say, Valentine?"

"Nothing, sir."

"I want you to talk."

"I would rather not."

Rose Lane had risen from her chair. She advanced and grasped her arm.



THE LADIES OF THE GATE OF HOPE SOCIETY AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR FAY.

She turned her eyes pleadingly toward him.

"It might mean your pardon," said Fay, stroking fondly the brown hair that crowned the girl's head.

"My pardon?" exclaimed Valentine.

"Yes, I am the lieutenant governor of the state. Perhaps I will intercede for you."

CHAPTER IV.

VALENTINE'S face revealed the thrill of surprise that shot through him as he learned that the man before him was no less a personage than the lieutenant governor of the state. And he might intercede for him; he might ask the governor for a pardon! At the same time Valentine was not insensible of the important part the girl at the state official's side had played in bringing about his change of fortune. She had called her uncle's attention to him and had evidenced keen interest in him. He would never forget that.

She stood now at the lieutenant governor's side, uncertain as to exactly what attitude she should maintain toward the young man in prison stripes who stood before her uncle and to whom she owed a lifelong debt of gratitude.

It was most embarrassing indeed, she concluded. She wondered what rule of etiquette applied in the case of a girl of eighteen who desired to enter into conversation with a convicted safe breaker. The flush in her cheeks mounted to her forehead, and into her soft brown eyes came the telltale of her impulsive temperament.

Jimmy Valentine, conscious of the girl's delicate beauty and noting that he still seemed to be the especial object of her attention, found difficulty in preserving an even demeanor. Finally, however, he secured a firm grip on himself and preserved a calm, undisturbed bearing with which even the watchful warden himself could find no fault. He addressed the lieutenant governor.

"After all," he said, "I think I will talk to you."

Handler did not approve of the turn events had taken.

"Oh, you will talk, will you?" he said threateningly to the prisoner.

Valentine was aware of the meaning of the warden's sinister tones. He had been an unwilling eyewitness on more than one occasion to the vengeance wreaked by the official on helpless prisoners who had aired their troubles or their experiences or those of fellow prisoners to the visitors from the outside world.

"You can't frighten me, warden," he announced defiantly. "I know I am taking a chance when I talk to an outsider, but—and the flash that revealed in him the strong man's dauntless spirit came into his eyes—"I'll take that chance and all others for the one chance I have here to speak for myself—for my liberty."

The warden, appreciating the futility as well as the lack of wisdom in attempting anything further in the lieutenant governor's presence, subsided.

Fay turned to his niece.

"Rose, are you sure this is the man?" he said in low tones.

The girl unhesitatingly stepped toward the convict.

"Mr. Valentine, have you ever seen me before?" she asked.

"Yes," replied No. 1289 without a falter.

"Can you tell me where?"

"Yes," he directed his eyes significantly toward the warden.

The lieutenant governor caught the suggestion and said:

"Warden, might I ask that this man, my niece and I be left alone for a moment?"

"Why?"

"I have asked a favor of you, Mr. Handler. I will be responsible for your prisoner, and the ladies will pardon me, I know."

"Oh, certainly," spoke Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Webster simultaneously and walked out of the room.

But Handler was not so quietly disposed of. He snarled at Fay:

"Valentine will tell a straight story, barring a few facts. He was a crook; had part of the coin stolen. If you can jump that pardon him."

The warden leaned forward and leered into the prisoner's face, saying, "If

you try to make a sucker of me you'll get yours."

Handler strode hastily out into one of the corridors of cells.

Rose again addressed the convict.

"Where did you see me before?"

"On the New York Central train between Buffalo and Rochester on the 8th of June two years ago. You were alone in the parlor car. I came in and saw a man sitting on the arm of your chair. You were pale and frightened. I pulled him away and took him into the smoking compartment. He came back again, and I a moment later heard you scream. I came in, and he attacked me. I hit locked him and threw him through the window."

Rose extended him her hand, which he eagerly grasped.

"And then after you threw the man through the window," asked Fay, "will you not tell me what you did, Mr. Valentine?"

"I was afraid I might have killed the man, so I left the train by the wrong side at the next station."

"He was badly hurt—died later, did he not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was he a friend of yours?"

"No, sir."

"Ever see him before?"

"No, sir."

"But he confessed that he was your partner in robbing the bank—why?"

"Likely because I threw him from the train."

"How did you come by the money identified as having been stolen from the bank?"

Valentine paused a moment before his reply.

"I won it of him playing whist on the train just before the row."

"Is Valentine your name?"

"No, sir."

"Then how did he know you as Valentine?"

"He asked my name while we were playing cards, and as I thought it none of his business I told him Valentine."

"What is your business?"

"I was originally an expert accountant; then I became an expert with the Globe Safe company."

"Tell me, did you give this evidence at the trial?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"The man who confessed had died. If I had told this story they would

have tried me for murder; that would have tried the lady in."

Rose Lane gave a gasp of ecstasy as she heard Jimmy Valentine's final words. She clasped her hands enthusiastically and turned to the lieutenant governor, exclaiming as she did so:

"Oh, uncle, just to think that he would not try to help himself keep out of jail by telling about rescuing me from that ruffian. And all because he didn't want to drag me into the case."

Rose drew a deep breath and gazed adoringly at Jimmy Valentine.

"Oh, uncle," she cried, "isn't he a perfectly dear safe breaker?"

When Jimmy Valentine recovered from the effect of Rose Lane's flattering description of him and felt that he could look the lieutenant governor in the face without the twitch of a single muscle he asked his question or if there was anything further that he cared to know.

"Yes," responded Fay. "I appreciate any thought you may have had for the young lady, my niece. But as you did not know her, had never before met her and could therefore have had little or no interest in her, I do not see how any thought of her would have influenced your actions. What think you, Mr. Valentine?"

No. 1289 was temporarily nonplused by the penetrating perception and cold analysis of the lieutenant governor, who was questioning him as though he was on trial for his life, with Fay as the cross examiner.

"I mean," began Valentine—"I mean they would have convicted me of murder on her testimony very probably—at least that is what I feared if they knew about her and got hold of her as a witness against me. I did not believe they could convict me on the burglary charge."

Rose Lane's enthusiasm began to cool as she heard her hero in his explanation hint that, after all, there might have been some other motive than thought of and for her in his refusal to drag her into a vulgar, sordid murder case. She was not experienced enough to realize that Jimmy Valentine had to satisfy the keen, searching, though withal kind hearted lieutenant governor, whose questions suggested a doubt of the convict's innocence. But the faith of the girl was not entirely shaken. She knew that this unfortunate young man would surely straighten out everything in the end. How could any one with so gracious and winning a smile and with

such adorable eyes ever have committed a crime greater than the pillage of his grandmother's jam closet? Yes, he was the victim of some strangely terrible plot, of heinous machinations like those of the French revolution or of the Spanish inquisition.

The lieutenant governor continued to press Valentine.

"But once convicted," he went on, "it seems to me that you would have made an application for a new trial."

"My lawyer is working on that now, sir."

Rose Lane pressed her uncle's hand and looked pleadingly at the state official as though supplicating his further aid for the prisoner. The lieutenant governor was responsive to the fair young girl's influence, and after a pause he spoke the words that were to fill with a new hope the tortured soul of Jimmy Valentine.

"Tell your lawyer to apply for a pardon. I promise you he shall have every possible assistance in his effort to secure it."

"Thank you, sir; thank you," murmured the prisoner gratefully, but his eyes turned involuntarily to those of the girl, who he well knew was really responsible for his new opportunity.

"And you can thank my niece, too," added Fay.

"I thank her most deeply."

"That's all," said Fay, moving away and beckoning to Rose.

Valentine stared as though to go through the door leading to the cell

corridor where Handler was pacing restlessly up and down. Suddenly the prisoner reconsidered. He took a step toward the girl, who stood watching him with an expression of pity in her eyes. He bent over as though to grasp her hand; then with a stoical effort he mastered himself and straightened back.

"Words are futile things sometimes," he said in a low, gentlemanly voice, with perfect pronunciation and intonation. "But I—"

"Yes, we know that," put in the lieutenant governor.

Rose Lane was deeply touched by the struggle that even her little burden of knowledge of the world told her was going on in the prisoner's breast.

"Goodby, Mr. Valentine," she said softly.

The prisoner replied in a half whisper.

"I would rather you called me by a name that is not disgraced. My true name is Lee Randall."

"Goodby, Lee Randall," said the girl.

"Goodby, God bless you," was the convict's trembling response as he turned slowly away to be led back to his cell and to Warden Handler.

"Rose," called the lieutenant governor.

"Yes," said the girl, going to him.

"Is he innocent?"

"Why, certainly."

"That's your intuition?"

"Yes, and that's all a girl has in judging men. Don't you think he is innocent, uncle?"

"I don't know, but I think he might be honest were he given the chance."

"And you are going to give it to him?"

"We will go to the governor. The matter rests entirely in his hands."

Rose threw her arm around her uncle's neck and kissed him fondly.

"The warden is very angry, and the man is helpless," she said fearfully.

"Why, they might even kill!"

"Oh, no, Rose, not that."

"But you realize—"

"Yes, but I don't think they would dare since I—"

"But I am in a chill of fear. The warden's manner—"

"Most warden are bullies, Rose, and I don't think this Handler an exception; I think a few words from me might—"

At this juncture Handler stormed into the office. He glared angrily at his visitors. At Fay's direction Rose went out into the waiting room.

"Finished your star chamber session, governor?" he asked sneeringly.

"Mr. Handler," sternly, "let me say something to you for your own benefit. You are an employee of the state. Employees have been removed, even warden, for a speech no more discourteous than the one you have just made. When Valentine gets out—and I hope it will be soon—I am going to ask him how he was treated, and if he tells me you treated him any worse after today than before I came I promise you a little polite h—t. Good day, sir."

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